

THE RUBAIYAT OF SARMAD

Translated by
Syeda Saiyidain Hameed



**Indian Council for Cultural Relations
New Delhi**

THE RUBAIYAT OF SARMAD

© 1991 : The Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Published by

Veena Sikri

Director General

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Azad Bhavan

Indraprastha Estate

New Delhi-110002

Designed & Printed by

VAP Enterprises

H-24, Green Park Extension

New Delhi-110016

CONTENTS

- 7** ForewordDr. Shanker Dayal Sharma
- 9** Translator's PrefaceSyeda Saiyidain Hameed
- 13** Sarmad ShaheedMaulana Abul Kalam Azad
- 43** The Rubaiyat of Sarmad

FOREWORD

Aashiq-o-ishq-o-but-o-buthgar-o- aiyyaari keest ?

Kaaba-o-dair-o-masajid hamaja yaari keest?

Gar dar aayi bechaman wahdat-e-yakrangi been

Gardar aan aashiq-o-maashuq-o-gul-o-khaari keest?

Who is the lover, beloved, idol, idol maker, but you?
Who is the universal Beloved of the Kaaba, the temple,
the mosque?

Come to the garden and see the unity in diversity of
colours.

In all this, who is the lover, the beloved, the flower, the
thorn?

The philosophical premise of this rubayi is the basis of Sufi thought, *Hama Oust*, which not only epitomises Sarmad's poetry but as a basic belief finds expression in the writings of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. This volume contains Azad's essay "Sarmad Shaheed" and the Rubaiyat of Sarmad, two parts of a whole, which had so far been housed in special collections of libraries and never been presented under one cover to an international audience. It also creates a link between two great men of India, Sarmad, the Sufi Saint, and Azad the apostle of humanism. The importance of their message of humanity has become more relevant with every passing phase in our history. The path charted by their life and work is a *mishal-e-raab* (a guiding taper) for us today. Sarmad, whose real name was Muhammad Said was born

at Kashan, an important business centre in Persia, during the time of Shah Abbas the Great, in a prosperous Armenian family. After the completion of his education and his conversion to Islam, Sarmad entered his ancestral vocation, and since India and Persia were closely linked culturally and economically, chose India for his trade activities. He arrived in India in 1631 and settled down in Thatta, the then capital and port of Sind. The rest of Sarmad's life is recorded in the essay by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from two major sources - *Miratul Khayal* by Sher Khan Lodhi and *Riaz-ul-Shuara* by Ali Quli Valeh Daghistani.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's father, Maulana Khairuddin was a Sufi Pir of the Qadiri and Naqshbandi order whose disciples persuaded him to return to Calcutta from Hejaz and take permanent residence there. Azad was educated at home by his father in a strictly traditional manner and later advanced beyond this discipline. He wanted to explore his own horizons and not remain content with the *taqlid* of his ancestors. He, therefore, pursued his individual quest rather than following his father's and his father's disciples' promptings to succeed him as a Pir and secure continuity in the Sufi traditions of the family. Later, he was to sympathise with the tenets of the *Al Manar* group with its emphasis on a return to the *Quran Sharief* and *Hadith* alone in the spirit of Ibn Taimiya. This was one aspect of Azad. On the other side it was the same Azad who wrote the most poignant piece on the Sufi saint Sarmad and imbued it with a feeling which is rarely seen even in his most impassioned prose. In terms of his philosophy, this essay records his admiration for Sarmad, a thinker at variance from orthodox religious dogma, and his position vis-a-vis Mulla Qawi, the

strict theologian and Sarmad's avowed antagonist. He clearly expresses his preference for Dara Shikoh, the philosopher-prince who wrote *Sirr-i-Akbar*, a translation of the Upanishads and perceived truth in the scriptures of different persuasions, over Aurangzeb Alamgir whom he accuses of, "violent suppression of the Truth", when it came to giving Sarmad the death sentence.

It is Azad's reverence for Sufism, particularly in his account of the courage and fortitude of Sufi saints when pitted against the might of empires recorded in his *Tazkirah* (1919) which indicates that although he has not committed himself to *Wahdat-ul-Wujood*, the most important concept in Sufism, his thought runs in the same direction. This approach is traceable as early as his essay "Sarmad Shaheed" written in 1910, and as late as his inaugural speech at the symposium on the "Concept of Man" in 1951. In "Sarmad Shaheed" he says of Dara Shikoh:

"The humility with which he met the Muslim divines is matched by the devotion with which he bowed his head before the Hindu saints and sadhus. Who can question the purity of this principle? Because in this exalted state of mind if we can still distinguish between kufr and Islam, then what is the difference between blindness and vision? The moth should seek the flame. If it is desirous of the lamp which is lit only in the mosque, its desire for self immolation is not complete:

A true lover of God is misled
Both by religion and lack thereof
A moth does not choose
Between the burning candle
Whether in the mosque or the temple."

The same principle as it evolves in his later writing, culminates in identifying the parallel in the Vedantic and Sufi philosophy of the concept of man. In his speech before the UNESCO symposium on the Concept of Man, he said:

“In the words of the Gita, ‘Here today behold the whole universe, moving and unmoving, and whatever else thou desirest to see, O’ Gudakesa, (Arjuna) are all unified in my Body.’”

A Sufi poet has expressed the same concept in the Arabic verse, ‘Thou think’st that thou art a small body: thou know’st not that a universe greater than the physical world is contained in thee’.

Azad’s vision transcended sects, religions and nations to take in the entire human race. In *Tarjuman Ul Quran* he explains *Wahdat-E-Din* as a basic Islamic concept, which is the matrix of Sufism and the underlying philosophy of all world religions:

“The path of God is one in every corner of the world. It cannot be more than one, or different than a uniform one. Therefore it was important that the instruction from day one was only one. The Quran says that all the prophets God sent, no matter in what age or which corner of the world, they all had the same path to follow. They were to impart one teaching – God’s universal law of felicity. (*Alamgir Qanoon-e-Saadat*). What was this universal law? Worship of one God and a life of good deeds (*aamaal-e-saaleh*). That was all. Any addition or any opposition to this is not the teaching of true religions (*din-e-haqiqi*).”

Azad’s essay and Sarmad’s poetry is imbued with this spirit of universal humanism. I conclude with recalling the words

of a great Sufi, Louis Massignon, who had been a close associate of the Maulana. At their last meeting in Paris in 1955, three years before Maulana passed away, Massignon records how well Maulana understood his crusading spirit, the same understanding and appreciation which he had shown for Sarmad and Dara Shikoh:

“He understood fully, nor did he attempt to smile at my stubbornness against contrary winds. It was also *his* last task, to hold one, and to right the helm forward, *Allah Wahdahu*.”

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This is the first time Sarmad's quartrains and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's essay "Sarmad Shaheed" have been combined in a single volume and rendered into English. Although all of Sarmad's 334 quartrains and a few miscellaneous poetic pieces exist in translation in *Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad* edited and translated by Professor Fazl Mahmud Asiri in Visva Bharati series II, Santiniketan in 1950, no one, to the best of my knowledge, has translated Maulana's "Sarmad Shaheed".

The quartrains used in this volume have been transcribed from *Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad* published in 1927 (1347 A.H.) by Munshi Syed Qurban Ali "Bismil", owner of the Shahjehani Press, Delhi. This edition includes the Urdu verse rendering by Syed Nawab Ali "Saulat" Lukhnavi. Predicated to this work is a shortened version of the essay "Sarmad Shaheed", written in 1910 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Azad's essay is a piece of excellent Urdu prose which challenges a translator to reflect in his work, the perfect harmony of its style and content. Interspersed with the prose is Azad's generous sprinkling of Sarmad's quartrains and other appropriate Persian couplets, which had become the hallmark of his literary style during the first three decades of his writing. Since the original work is a fine combination of terseness and stylistic embellishment, its English rendering is required to reflect the very same thing, without becoming so literal that its syntac-

tical structures prove too exotic to a non-Urdu readership.

Next is the selection of Sarmad's rubaiyat. What is the rationale for selecting fifty out of a total available 334 rubayis? Using Azad's essay as base it was important to provide a sample of Sarmad's poetry by taking examples from various topics he wrote about. The order in which the quatrains have been arranged is based on Sarmad's recurrent themes, such as Love, God, World, Humility, Contentment, Transience, Nakedness, Desire, Renunciation, Old Age and Death. While the subject titles are not indicated, as such, rubayis on 'Love' are followed by 'God', and so on. There is nothing exclusive about the categories – one rubayi primarily about Love may contain themes like Renunciation, Death, Desire – hence the complexity of the paradigm.

The word rubayi is defined in the *Firhang-e-Asifiya* as "those four lines which are rhymed in a special matrix". The first, second and fourth lines rhyme with the same *radeef* (end word). The third line also rhymes with the other three but mostly remains blank. This rhyme scheme has a unique impact. The rhyme of the first two lines, which seems lost in the third returns as an echo in line four, thus completing the poem and providing the reader the aural and aesthetic pleasure of the quatrain. This raises the question of the translation being contained, similarly, in four lines. Although a four-line verse rendering would have been most suitable, it proved too restrictive. It may have communicated the idea, but the *aamad* or inspiration (as opposed to *aawurd* i.e. forced or uninspired

expression) would have entirely disappeared. In transferring the poetry from one linguistic medium to another certain liberties had to be taken in length and number of lines, plus blank verse to reflect Sarmad's simplicity, originality and natural flow of feelings and ideas.

Sarmad pressed the most complex Sufi beliefs into a restrictive matrix with great precision, intensity and economy. He, therefore, avoided the use of uncommon allusions, obtrusive similes, metaphors and syllogisms. Well known themes, presented with simple wisdom make them increasingly effective and assimilative. His vocabulary, free from unnatural adornment may be understood even by people with a limited knowledge of the Persian language. To provide the flavour of his poetry, and to help the reader identify the vocabulary and enjoy the laconic expression, the original has been presented in transliteration.

The Bergsonian epithet that the original and its translation may be likened to a gold coin and its equivalent value in loose change, constitutes the translator's trauma. Regardless, one can aspire to be a FitzGerald to a Khayyam and by honing the skill hope to reduce the gap between the translation and the original .As the Urdu proverb goes, "A bracelet on the wrist does not need a mirror". It is in this spirit that Azad's "Sarmad Shaheed" and "The Rubaiyat of Sarmad" are presented in this volume.

Syeda Saiyidain Hameed

SARMAD SHAHEED

All those who are elevated by your love
Are asleep in the fields of martyrdom.
Victory for them in the battle of two worlds
Is won through love,
All soldiers of love achieve martyrdom.

Khwaja Sahib (Khwaja Hasan Nizami) insists that I write something about Sarmad. And such is my state that I have embarked on a journey 1300 miles away from my life-source, namely my library. It seems, however, that some people, are so pleasantly persuasive that the only answer they elicit is “yes”. Therefore, instead of a comprehensive thesis, here are a few jottings, to the best of my ability.

Lives of poets written during and after the period of Aurangzeb Alamgir, contain no more than a few lines about Sarmad. Events recorded by ancient historians are so sketchy that their cumulative summary cannot fill the space on a postcard. I scanned a few histories of the period, hoping to find Sarmad hidden among the pages. But it seems that the political pundits had carefully screened him out.

Mirza Mohd. Kazim had started writing the history of the Alamgiri era from oral tradition. Having recorded ten years of Alamgir's reign, he was abruptly ordered to stop. During the reign of Shah Alam, Nawab Inayat Ullah thought of completing the task. He appointed Mustaid Khan and forty years of history were thus written. But when I looked for Sarmad around the time of his execution, I found all references to him carefully expunged. Apparently, the chroniclers preferred that the blood of

this martyr should not stain the illuminations along the margins of their books of history and poetry.

Sarmad was assassinated the same year that Cooch Bihar and Assam were invaded. Histories of that period are full of panegyrics about those splendid victories. How would the historian, Mustaid Khan, have known that in future, eyes which will scan his history will not give more than a passing glance to Aurangzeb's conquests? Instead, they will cry tears of blood at the crushing defeat of this mighty Mughal on the battlefield of truth. The defeat that was caused by placing on the scaffold the venerable head of a lover and a sufi saint.

I have come across two authoritative sources on Sarmad. The first which I have brought along on my journey is *Miratul Khayal* by Sher Khan Lodhi. The other is *Riaz-ul-Shuara* by Ali Quli Valeh Daghistani, who lived during the reign of Mohammad Shah and wrote a meticulous treatise on the lives of Persian poets. Its original manuscript, available in the Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta, has provided most of my source material. Although written during the reign of Mohammad Shah, its period is close enough to Aurangzeb's to warrant a faithful account. Another anthology was compiled by a poet of good taste, Sirajuddin Siraj, during the reign of Alamgir II. A little from here, a little from there has contributed to the floral arrangement woven into a wreath which I offer with deep reverence and humility at the mausoleum of Shaheed Sarmad.

According to the author of *Miratul Khayal* "Aslash as firangistan-o-armini bood" (His home was Armenia in

the European continent). Other accounts trace his origin to Jewish ancestors. Daghistani adds that his country of origin was Kashan. This is not contradictory to the above version. Since ancient times Iran had a vast Armenian population which was mostly Christian with a sprinkling of Jews. Over the years, they adopted a uniform European lifestyle and moved up to the forefront of Iranian society, having gained a fine knowledge and modern education. A century ago, with the exception of religion, they were undistinguishable from Muslims. The extent of their knowledge of Islamic ways made them fit comfortably into the most sophisticated Muslim gatherings. Poetry anthologies of the period contain many selections from and accounts of Armenian-Christian poets. Their poetry is comparable to the best of the Muslim-Iranian poets. Sarmad's family must have been Jewish-Armenian, settled in Kashan. His Armenian origin must have led to the conclusion that he was European.

When the sun shines its rays do not seek the garden to make it the focus of their radiance. Their brilliance, like that of God, the Munificent's, is available to one and all. If they gild the minarets of the royal palaces, don't they paint with gold the dry branches of the forest poplars? By way of analogy, I am explaining the universal benediction of the sun of Islam.

When the giant waves of this ocean broke against the shore, they first destroyed the distinctions of caste and class. When time was ripe for saturation they slaked universal thirst. Whether they were members of the Quraish, the blacks of Ethiopia, the dwellers of Yethreb

this martyr should not stain the illuminations along the margins of their books of history and poetry.

Sarmad was assassinated the same year that Cooch Bihar and Assam were invaded. Histories of that period are full of panegyrics about those splendid victories. How would the historian, Mustaid Khan, have known that in future, eyes which will scan his history will not give more than a passing glance to Aurangzeb's conquests? Instead, they will cry tears of blood at the crushing defeat of this mighty Mughal on the battlefield of truth. The defeat that was caused by placing on the scaffold the venerable head of a lover and a sufi saint.

I have come across two authoritative sources on Sarmad. The first which I have brought along on my journey is *Miratul Khayal* by Sher Khan Lodhi. The other is *Riaz-ul-Shuara* by Ali Quli Valeh Daghistani, who lived during the reign of Mohammad Shah and wrote a meticulous treatise on the lives of Persian poets. Its original manuscript, available in the Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta, has provided most of my source material. Although written during the reign of Mohammad Shah, its period is close enough to Aurangzeb's to warrant a faithful account. Another anthology was compiled by a poet of good taste, Sirajuddin Siraj, during the reign of Alamgir II. A little from here, a little from there has contributed to the floral arrangement woven into a wreath which I offer with deep reverence and humility at the mausoleum of Shaheed Sarmad.

According to the author of *Miratul Khayal* "Aslash as firangistan-o-armini bood" (His home was Armenia in

the European continent). Other accounts trace his origin to Jewish ancestors. Daghistani adds that his country of origin was Kashan. This is not contradictory to the above version. Since ancient times Iran had a vast Armenian population which was mostly Christian with a sprinkling of Jews. Over the years, they adopted a uniform European lifestyle and moved up to the forefront of Iranian society, having gained a fine knowledge and modern education. A century ago, with the exception of religion, they were undistinguishable from Muslims. The extent of their knowledge of Islamic ways made them fit comfortably into the most sophisticated Muslim gatherings. Poetry anthologies of the period contain many selections from and accounts of Armenian-Christian poets. Their poetry is comparable to the best of the Muslim-Iranian poets. Sarmad's family must have been Jewish-Armenian, settled in Kashan. His Armenian origin must have led to the conclusion that he was European.

When the sun shines its rays do not seek the garden to make it the focus of their radiance. Their brilliance, like that of God, the Munificent's, is available to one and all. If they gild the minarets of the royal palaces, don't they paint with gold the dry branches of the forest poplars? By way of analogy, I am explaining the universal benediction of the sun of Islam.

When the giant waves of this ocean broke against the shore, they first destroyed the distinctions of caste and class. When time was ripe for saturation they slaked universal thirst. Whether they were members of the Quraish, the blacks of Ethiopia, the dwellers of Yethreb

and Baath, the citizens of Iran and Europe, the lofty and the meek, the near and the far, every one was immersed in the waters of benediction. The only criteria were their capacity to imbibe the goodness of the faith. Every race and region was rewarded with justice and equity. Abu Jehl was a Quraish and so close to the fountainhead, but all his life he remained deprived. Bilal was Ethiopian and Suhail was Roman. The distance of their place of birth had no bearing on the enrichment they received from Islam. Rain falls on every part of planet earth, but every part does not become a garden of fruit and flowers.

Grasp and reach have been
Interdependent since times past.
Had it fallen it would have become a pearl
In the eye it is a tear.

It was due to its universal appeal that Islam became a world religion. Although Arabia was the cradle, it could not retain its status as the centre of Islam. New converts to the religion appeared from near and far, and became so efficient and qualified in all aspects of Islam, that the Arabs had to break their own ranks to accommodate them. Biographies of illustrious men are evidence of the fact that the neo-Muslims were dominant in all fields of knowledge. Histories of Philosophy and Sufism, are replete with accounts of the selfless devotion and contribution of neo-Muslims. Islam was all-embracing, even like the love of God embraces all His creation. It had no concern with sect, nationality, grandeur or poverty.

Sarmad is the prime example of Islam's all-encompassing scope. He was born to Armenian parents settled in

Iran, who professed Jewish or Christian belief. During his early years he converted to Islam. We have no clue about his family name, nor any inkling about his Islamic name. In the Lives of Poets he is referred to as Sarmad. It is another matter that namelessness is nothing unusual among people of Sarmad's faith. These are men who take pride in living unknown, unnamed, and dying unlamented.

In thy presence I cannot even say,
"I am here".

In some anthologies he is referred to as Saeed-i-Sarmad, which reveals one part of his Islamic name. There is very little information available about his education. But the general consensus derived from Lives of Poets is that in all aspects of education his achievement was par excellence. This fact is borne out by the later events of his life.

It was trade which first brought him to India. He entered the country with Iranian goods, since India of those days was not only the centre of education and culture, but also of wealth and goods. The young trader was happily moving around with his merchandise, not knowing in what business he will have to invest his entire life's savings. He wanted to trade his Iranian merchandise for exotic Indian spices and rare rubies and emeralds from the deepest mines. At this time he did not know that fate had given her verdict against him. Trade was his destiny but not in the commercial market. His fate was hitched to the market of love and beauty, where the accepted

currency is not gold and silver but the fragments of broken hearts. The rule of this market is to exchange for one's entire sum of sense and intelligence, the wealth of a beautiful glance, or a haughty brow. Even at such a profound investment, the transaction is still regarded a cheap bargain.

The buyer wants the lover's soul
With love as broker
I nearly sold myself to such a buyer
What a wonderful deal I had!

During those days, Iranian sailors usually came to India via Sind's famous city Thatta, which unfortunately has now been reduced to geographic anonymity. Thatta was Sarmad's Mount Sinai, where Beauty first unveiled herself. The story goes that it was a Hindu boy whose divine glance cast a spell over Sarmad. That it happened, is no wonder! When a heart is vulnerable to love, the darner's needle acts as efficaciously as the executioner's axe in slicing it down the middle. In this trade, the buyer is indifferent and careless, while the seller is desperate to sell his wares. Those who wear their hearts on their sleeves, do not look for special qualities in the buyers. It seems that this simple Iranian trader, with an intensely lonely heart, was desperately looking for a buyer. When he felt the thrill of discovering one, he did not bother to find out who he was and what he offered in exchange. That a precious commodity (his heart) was desired by a pair of magical eyes, was enough reason for celebration. The deal was clinched.

This was Sarmad's first foray into the desert in which he was destined to wander for several years. Sarmad's experience was not unique. No one is worthy of being called human unless he has crossed the rubicon of love. He who has not experienced the intensity of desire or deluge of tears is less than human. When the ascetic in the mosque bows his head in Namaaz, despite all his piety and devotion, he cannot help enjoying thoughts of the smiling Houris and Ghilmaans of Paradise. Even the super-ascetics who seek the truth in the recesses of mosques are not free from these alluring images.

The Houri displays herself to God's devotees.
This is how love initiates to its ways
The uninitiated.

For this reason it is said that those who are God's true devotees, have also been seen banging their heads against the ramparts of their beloveds' mansions. Unless the heart has been drenched in the potion of pain, it is like a piece of ice which has been seen melting, but no one has ever seen it engulfed in flames. The sanctum of love is a fire-temple. Only those are allowed to enter who are willing to sacrifice their hearts at its fire-altar, and fan its flames with their cloak, so that it burns ever so brightly.

It is not the fortune of the faint-hearted
To suffer in love
Suffering is for those
Who walk in the flames of love.

The first condition for the love of God is, "Close your

eyes to all love other than love of the Almighty". But the human heart is so entangled in the business of life, that unless it is struck a lethal blow, it cannot disentangle itself from this commerce. The bee that homes its way to the honeycomb, gets so firmly stuck that it has to be pulled out before it can fly away. Man, too, is stuck, unless he receives a massive jolt! Only the angel of love can administer that jolt, since he possesses unnatural power in his wings. One stroke of his sword smites into two the chains of worldly pleasures and all blood ties. Freed from all worldly ties, when man looks at himself he finds that his feet are bound by one link of the chain, the rest of the links being broken. It is called the link of the chain of eternity. It was this state which led to the famous lament of Arif Attar.

Hedonism to the pagan
Faith to the faithful
For Attar, who loves
Pain to fill the heart.

Think. The dead heart which never fantasized about the breaking of the veil, is it capable of losing its senses when faced with the dazzling image of the True Beloved? The melancholic heart which has not beaten to the rhythm of a sleepless night sprinkled with images of a sleeping beauty, can its rhythm keep up with the tortures of longing for the Real Beloved? The dumb heart which has not offered its devotions at the altar of a proud beloved, how can it smash the idol of its ego? The inert heart which has not danced to the music of the beloved's voice, how can it go into a trance to the music of Eternity?

He who has not lost his senses when faced with the dazzling vision of his beloved, how can he be expected to faint at the vision of Mt. Sinai? The wick that has been lit once is easy to reignite. The new wick has to be held a long time before the flame:

Once smitten it is easier to fall in love
Like the wick of the lamp
Once lit, is easier to light again.

O you lovers of beauty, why wait for the unveiling? Isn't the beauty of the veil sufficient? The blind prophet Yaqub's eyes did not need Yusuf to appear before their sightless orbs to regain their light. His vision was restored the moment perfume from Yusuf's garment's wafted towards his nose. The Quran says:

Inni laajudo reha Yusufa laula an tufannidum.
I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf;
Nay, think me not a dotard.

Quran S XI: 94

When the celestial Mehfil reaches its zenith and the cup begins to circulate, a moment occurs when the bitterness of the wine becomes pleasant. Suddenly, the Saqi lifts her veil and the liquor becomes unnecessary. Her glance is the more potent intoxicant:

What more needs one drunk with your love
So long as your glance
Intoxicates.

The blushing goblet was placed before Sarmad. The potency of the wine depends upon the beauty of the Saqi. Therefore, we should not forget the Hindu boy whose amorous glance made Sarmad lose his senses. Every lover does not have the fortuity of a Qais or Farhad. More's the pity! The only fact we know about Sarmad's beloved is that he was a Hindu. Knowledge of a single fact in this case is worth a tome. In the marketplace of love, when a bargain is transacted who cares about the identity of the buyers, and the value of the exchange?

I am sold in the market of love
I know not my buyer, nor my price.

Historians are not unanimous about where this incident took place. Valeh Daghistani writes, "The port of Surat", Azad Bilgrami says "Azimabad, Patna". But the oldest and most authentic *Miratul-khayal* says: "*Dar asna-e-tijarat ba shahr-e-Thatta. Bar Hindu pisar-e-ashiq gasht*". (He went to Thatta for trading and there he fell in love with a Hindu lad). I tend to believe this version. But no matter at which spot the lightning strikes, what matters is the farmer's smouldering barn.

On everyone it touches, love leaves a delicious impact. Every lover may not be a Qais, but he does become a *Majnun**. When love enters human consciousness it compels reason to exit. Sarmad was in a state of ecstasy. In this state he lost all his wealth and worldly possessions. The only shackles left were his garments, which

*Qais and Majnun were two names of a legendary lover. Majnun also means crazed.

he threw away and became totally free from worldly bindings. Attachment to things is maddening for those who aspire to achieve ultimate detachment.

There is no fault
With a mad man
The fault lies in you—
Love hasn't maddened you yet.

Wandering in the wilderness is love's favourite pastime, since it hones and matures the intellect. Majnun, who stands at the forefront of lover's ranks, has the unique distinction of having no rival in "sehranavardi" (wandering in the desert). Sarmad wandered through the deserts of Sind, warming the soles of his feet. Many harsh winters and blistering Indian summers ravaged his naked body. At last he realized:

Why do you wander in the wilderness
Looking for Him?
Sit still. If he is Khuda*
He will appear on His own.

Those were days when Alamgir was about to make another move on the chessboard of the Indian Empire. During the last days of Emperor Shahjehan, Dara Shikoh was heir-apparent. A man of sufi temperament, he was unique among Mughal princes. It is a blot on historical veracity, that the pen which recorded the history of the Mughal period was always held by Prince Dara Shikoh's

*God. Also "Khud-aa", meaning, "come yourself".

enemies. Behind the screen of political manoeuvres, the real picture has become blurred. From his early years Dara displayed the attributes of a Dervish. He always kept company with philosophers and sufis. His writings indicate that the author was a man of excellent taste. The overwhelming proof of his taste is that in pursuing his goal he lost the distinction between the temple and mosque. The humility with which he met the Muslim divines was matched by the devotion with which he bowed his head before the Hindu saints and sadhus. Who can deny the purity of this principle? Because in this exalted state of mind, if one can still distinguish between Kufr and Islam then what is the difference between blindness and vision? The moth should seek the flame. If it is desirous of the lamp which is lit only in the mosque, its desire for self immolation is not complete.

A true lover of God is misled
Both by religion and lack thereof
A moth does not choose
Between the burning candle,
Whether in the mosque or the temple.

Once Sarmad had entered the ramparts of Delhi, Death said, "stop!". The wine that he was searching for was available only in this one tavern. The author of *Miratul-Khayal*, who stands in the first rank of the devotees of Alamgir, writes: "Dara Shikoh preferred the company of mendicants, madmen and lovers. He therefore took Sarmad into his circle." This particular author gets so engrossed in discussions about sanity and insanity that he does not realize that there are scales on which if madness was

placed on one end and reason on the other, they would never tilt on the side of reason. Then there are buyers who would offer their entire wealth for one grain of madness, infact throng the marketplace to make a bid for madness. In any event, we prefer Dara Shikoh's indulgence towards the insane to Alamgir's coterie of the rational and the sane. In the latter case, the sword of vigilance had been dyed in the blood of lovers, while in the former, blood flowed freely from the severed veins of lovers' necks. Probably Dara Shikoh was tired of the alertness of men like Alamgir. He, therefore, preferred the company of *majnoons* like Sarmad.

Sarmad stayed on with Dara Shikoh. The latter was devoted to Sarmad. Sometimes the agony of love would force Sarmad to leave the palace. But he could not leave the precincts of Shahjehanabad because he knew that this was his final destination. At last Shahjehan's illness and Dara Shikoh's imminent succession brought Almagir's designs into stark daylight. After a period of unrest and bloodshed, in 1069 A.H. Aurangzeb ascended the throne. Dara Shikoh and his followers were in for hard times. Several fled the capital with Dara Shikoh. Those left in the capital found their ship caught in the worst storm. But for this one human being, lost to the world and immersed in thoughts of his Beloved, there was nothing but blissful oblivion. Where was the need to raise his head and look at the world around him? Had he looked up at the milling unrest on all sides, it would have made no difference. How could he leave? Despite his innocence he was aware that whatever had happened so far had been only the first milestone of his journey. The last

milestone had to be crossed in this very same place.

You wont get a light sentence in love
By sustaining a wound or two
With his bow-shaped eyebrows
The archer is poised for you.

Sarmad's execution has been recorded by various authors of Tazkira's. According to *Miratul Khayal*, the following *rubayi* of Sarmad made the custodians of Islamic law bristle with anger. They declared it kufr (heresy) stating that it negates the concept of Miraj*.

He who understood the mystery of Reality became
vaster than the vast heaven;
Mullah says that Mohammad ascended the Heavens
Sarmad says that the Heavens descended to
Mohammad.

What did this simple fakir have to do with the drums of war ? He did not even glance upwards to see what commotion these blind dogmatists were causing. He was at a stage in which the squabbling of the Mullahs could not reach his ears.

Intellect plays no part
In the many-splendoured blossoming of love.
It has nothing to do
With understanding the mysteries
Of Majnoon's insanity.

*Prophet Mohammad's (p.b.u.h) ascent to Heaven where he saw the vision of Allah.

In Alamgir's eyes, Sarmad's greatest crime was his closeness to Dara Shikoh. He needed an excuse for ordering his execution. In Asia, politics has always used religion to camouflage its designs. Many political sentences were given the guise of religious heresies. Therefore, when no other excuse could be found it was declared that nakedness was against accepted Islamic practice. The above rubayi was declared as the denial of Miraj. Mullah Qawi being the chief Qazi, was sent to Sarmad to investigate the reason for nudity. The Mullah asked, "Despite your wisdom and knowledge, why have you chosen nakedness?" Sarmad answered, "What can I do? The devil is qawi* on me !" He recited this extempore rubayi:

My tall Beloved has dwarfed me
His wine cup eyes have snatched my senses
He is in my arms, yet I seek him.
What a strange thief
He has stripped me of my garments.

The Mullah was furious. Sarmad's insult was directed at his moribund interpretation of Islam, plus his venerable name was linked with no less creature than Iblis, the Sami (the Devil). He informed Aurangzeb that he had gathered enough evidence for the kufr sentence. He was about to dip his quill in ink for the fatwa, this being the ulema's most lethal weapon, but Alamgir stopped him. He was shrewd enough to realize the weakness of the Mullah's sentence. He knew that Sarmad was not an ordinary person, whose execution would be taken as a

*Qawi-strong. Also the Mullah's name.

routine matter. The man had no equal in learning and wisdom. In piety he had reached a point that all of Shahjehanabad had become his murid (devotee). Therefore, the execution was postponed pending the fabrication of a better excuse.

During 1300 years, since the advent of Islam, the instrument of the fatwa has been a sword without sheath. The blood of thousands of believers in truth is testimony to its cutting edge. During any given period of Islamic history, there are examples of kings who made equal use of both the pen of the Qazi and sword of the General in bleeding to death whosoever threatened their supremacy. Blood games were not only restricted to the Sufi's and patriots, whoever dared to come close to the Mysteries of Reality and managed to read the intricacies of the Divine Design, was pounced upon by custodians of the Fiqah (Islamic Law). Sarmad was executed by the same sword:

On the Day of Judgement
When Naziri appears in his blood-stained shroud,
People will raise a dirge,
"Whose injustice has caused all this ?"

Finally, Sarmad was asked to appear before a gathering of the elderly and the wise. The decision was to be made by the will of majority. Sarmad appeared. Alamgir asked the first question:

"People say that Sarmad predicted an empire for Dara. Is it true?"

"Yes. My prediction proved true. Dara Shikoh was crowned

king in the Empire of Eternity."

The Ulema asked.

"Nudity is against the Shara. What is your rationale?"
Sarmad had already answered this allegation:

What a strange thief
He has stripped me of my garments.

During the last days of Alamgir there lived a grand old man, Khwaja Ibrahim Badakhshani. In his younger days he was a soldier, employed by Fatehullah Khan, an Emir at Alamgir's court. It so happened that a seer, Mir Jalaluddin Badakhshani became impressed with Ibrahim and took him on as a pupil. Under his guidance, he became *Sabib-e-Haal** and built up a following of thousands of persons in Hindustan and Deccan. Valeh Daghistani quotes him as an eyewitness at Sarmad's trial. When the ulema asked Sarmad to wear his robes and Sarmad did not comply, the Emperor said, "Nudity is not fit cause for execution, ask him to recite the *Kalima-e Tayyaba*." The Emperor had heard that Sarmad never recited more than the first two words of the Kalima "*La Ilah*." On this occasion, too, he adhered to his practice and recited "*La Ilah*." The ulema raised a howl of protest. Sarmad said "I am still at the stage of "No", I have not yet reached the "Yes". If I say "*Illalah*", it will be a lie. How can I say what does not rise from within?"

The ulema gave their verdict. This is blatant kufr, they declared. If he does not repent and say "*Tauba*",** he

*God-intoxicated

**I regret

deserves nothing less than execution. These godly men of worldly ways did not understand that Sarmad was far above their pedantic discussions of kufr and faith. Self-impressed with their wrists of execution, they often climbed on the pulpit of their mosques or madrasas, and thought about the heights to which they had risen and still aspired to rise. But Sarmad had reached the pinnacle of love from where the walls of the mosque and the temple are seen standing face to face. Here the insignias of kufr and faith are hoisted simultaneously.

Here is a land
Where people freely talk about paganism.
No one engages in dialectics
About Islam.

Sarmad had honestly spoken his state of mind. Those who do not believe in blind faith (this absence of passive acceptance is the real search for truth) want to eye-witness an event before offering their agreement. To see the Ultimate Reality one must wager nothing less than one's life, a state which Sarmad had not reached so far. Therefore, how could he say "It is He"? All travellers on this route have to pass this stage of the journey. Sarmad's crime was that what others drank secretly, he took to his lips at the public square. No wonder, then, that he qualified himself for being whip-lashed by the custodians of Islam.

Men of the cloak, even if drunk go unnoticed
Stories of lovers do rounds of the marketplace.

If the end was to be martyrdom, this public declaration was essential. No matter in what direction the dromedary faced, it was the responsibility of the Unknown Hand to turn its face in this one inevitable direction!

When Mansur was permitted to proclaim "I am Truth",
He was freed from the obligation
Of blood money and prison sentence.

When Sarmad refused to say *tauba*, the Ulema readily gave their fatwa. The next day he was taken to the scaffold. *Miratul Khayal* records that this event occurred in 1072 AH when Alamgir had been on the throne for no more than three years:

So inextricably united am I with my Friend
In communion of love
One part of us cries "I am Truth"
The other is sent to the gallows.

Asadullah, a man of Dervish temperament states that he was devoted to Sarmad. When the trouble began he went to Sarmad and pleaded, "If you change your habit, seeing how these men of God are entreating you, would it matter?" Sarmad took one look at him and spoke:

An age has passed
Since Mansur's "An Al Haq".
I am here to give fresh lustre
To the gallows.

When Sarmad was taken to the execution ground, the

entire city crowded the streets. But what can one say about the fickleness of love ? The favourite pastime here is the spectacle of blood, and the favourite game, the game of execution. Whenever a lover moves forward with his head on the outstretched palm of his hand, he seems like a bridegroom leading his wedding procession followed by his friends who jostle each other:

For my crime of loving you
I am dragged into the marketplace
Noise and excitement resounds,
O come to the terrace
To watch this splendid spectacle!

It was mortal love that made him desire that his beloved appears at the terrace. He was so deeply involved in his communion with God that he looked up only once. That moment occurred when his executioner moved forward flashing his sword. He is said to have smiled, looked straight into his executioner's eyes, and spoken the following words:

Come
O come, I implore you!
In whatever guise you come
I know you well.

Miratul Khayal records that as he spoke these lines, he placed his neck under the executioner's sword, and surrendered his life to his creator.

Some people believe that the spot of Sarmad's grave is actually the place at which he was executed. But Valeh

Daghistani explains; “He was executed near Jama Masjid and buried in the same spot.” He writes further: “The author had the privilege of visiting his grave a second time. His graveside is lusciously green during all the four seasons of the year. At the mausoleum of this “Mansur the Second” one experiences a sense of exhilaration.” Daghistani wrote these lines in 1160 AH during the reign of Mohammad Shah. But even after all these years Sarmad’s place of martyrdom is a place of pilgrimage, where the rich and poor arrive with hands lifted in prayer and *Sura-e-Fatiba* on their lips.

When you pass by my graveside, have fortitude.
It shall become a place of worship
For all those smitten with love.

Khalifa Ibrahim, whose reference is given above, narrates that Sarmad had never recited the *Kalima* beyond the first two syllables. But after his martyrdom people heard from his severed head the sound of the remaining two syllables *Illalab* recited thrice. Daghistani writes that a group of elite passers-by reported that Sarmad’s lips moved not only with words of the *Kalima*, but also *Hamdi-Ilabi**. Today people may not give credence to oral traditions, and it is a biographer’s duty to separate tradition from history, but we were not surprised at this eyewitness record. If one should not, on principle, listen to hearsay, one should at least see the facts as they are. During the spring, we have often seen flowers conversing. During the fall we have

*Praise of Allah

heard the dry desolate branches whispering to one another. It is, therefore, no great wonder that the lips of Sarmad's severed head were seen in motion. That sound still echoes in our ears.

Who can determine
The cost of dying in love ?
Every such martyrdom
Is an obligation on me.
For it is I who should have died
Not he.

Alamgir ascended the throne in 1069 *AH* and three years later, Sarmad was executed. After that he ruled over the Mughal Empire for an age. But people believe that,

Blood shed for love's sake
Is never wasted.

The myriad colours of Sarmad's blood seeped into Aurangzeb's life, and never again did he experience a single peaceful day. His dying days were spent in desolation, away from home. But historians of the era were incapable of recording these facts. Better that we consider Alamgir to be handicapped in this matter. History is a compendium of surmises, doubts and personal expressions. To this day, if an incident occurs a few miles away and two correspondents report on it, they cannot agree on the sequence of events. Who can claim to have knowledge of the conditions prevailing at the time and the circumstances which plagued Alamgir ? Above all, if love's martyr himself does not complain about his executioner, why should we dip our pen in

the muddy ink of blame? When Sarmad said to his executioner "In whatever guise you come, I know you well", how could he harbour any resentment against Alamgir or his ulema ? In matters of love there is no concept of revenge and enmity is forbidden. The greatest homage the lover can offer at this altar is to bow his head, and, if possible, when the executioner comes flashing his sword, kiss his lifted hand.

O Zahuri, with your heart so filled with love
There is no room for hatred and for enemies.

In my library I have an authentic hand written copy of Sarmad's poetry, but it is not available just now. One day, inshallah, I will present a collection of his poetry. I had intended writing only a few lines, but I have written several pages. The story of love is endless. Therefore, I want to stop after having recited *Fatiba* for Sarmad's soul. Unfortunately, this story could not be told briefly. But the longer one mourns love's martyrs, the better it is.

So enchanting was the story
That I prolonged it.
Just like tales that were woven
Around Moses' staff
While he was in God's presence
At Mount Sinai.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

THE RUBAIYAT OF SARMAD

Sarmad gham-e-ishq bulhawas ra na-dehand
Soz-e-dil-e-parwana magas ra na-dehand
Umre-bayad ke yaar aayad be kinaar
Eindaulat-e-Sarmad hama kas ra na-dehand.

O Sarmad!

The pain of love is not given to the lustful
The passion of a moth is not given to the honey bee.
It takes a lifetime to unite with the Beloved
This divine bliss is not given to everyone.

Ba fikr-o-khayal kas na baashad kaaram
Dar taur-e-ghazal tareeqa-e-Hafiz daaram
Amma ba rubai um mureed-e-Khayyam
Na juraa kash-e-baada-e-ou bisiaram.

Sad shukr kay dildar ze man khushnood ast
Har dam ba karam wa har nafs dar jood ast
Nuqsan bay man az mehr-o-mohabbat na raseed
Sauda kay dilam kard tamamash sood ast.

What use to me are another's ideas?
In ghazal I follow the style of Hafiz.
In rubayi I am the disciple of Khayyam.
But I do not draw much
From his cup of wine.

A hundred thanks
That my Beloved is pleased with me!
Every moment He is gracious and kind.
No loss did I suffer in love.
In this bargain
I spent only the interest
And saved the principal.

Aan shokh ba man nazar na daarad che kunam
Aah-e-dil-e-man asar na daarad che kunam
Ba aan kay hamesha dar dilam mi manad
Az haal-e-dilam khabar na daarad che kunam.

Har chand gul-o-khaar dar ein bagh khush ast
Bay yaar dil az baagh, na az raagh khush ast
Choon khoon-e-dilam lala bebeen dar rang ast
Ein chashm-o-chiragh neez ba daagh khush ast.

My Beloved

Does not even glance at me.
My laments have no effect
Ah! What can I do?
He who dwells
In my heart always
Does not know my pain.
What can I do?

Joyful

The flowers in this garden,
But without the beloved
Neither the garden nor meadow
Pleases the heart.
The tulip, apple of the garden's eye,
And red like the blood of my heart,
Is happy only
Because it hides a scar within.

Doori nafasay mera az ou mumkin neest
Ein yak jeheti ba guftugu mumkin neest
Ou behr-dilam subu ast- ein harf-e-ghalat
Gunjaish-e-behr dar subu mumkin neest.

Sarmad! der-e-deen ajab shikasti kardi
Iman b-fida-e-chashm-e-masti kardi
Ba ijz-o-niyaz jumla naqd-e-khud ra
Rafti-o-nisaar-e-but-parasti kardi.

Separation

For a moment from my Beloved? Impossible.
Unanimity in conversation? Impossible.
An ocean He,
My heart a goblet, a solecism!
For the goblet to contain the ocean?
Impossible.

Sarmad!

In religion you have caused
Strange disruption.
Sacrificed your faith
To an intoxicating glance.
Your wealth and riches with humility and devotion,
You have surrendered to your idol worship.

Bilkhwah na shud do-chaar yaaray bejehan
Ghumkhwar na deedam bakaray bejehan
Aan gul kay dahad bou-ai-wafa nayabast
Kun ser e khazanay-wa-baharay bejehan.

Tanha na hameen dair-o-haram khana-e-oust
Ein 'arz-o-sama tamaam kaashana-e-oust
Aalam hama deewana-e-afsaana-e-oust
Aaqil buwad aan kasi kay deewana-e-oust.

Jn this world
I found no soul mates.
None did I find to share my grief.
Whether you comb the garden
During autumn or spring,
Rarely do you find
The flower of faithfulness.

His home is confined
Not only to the temple and mosque.
The earth and the sky are equally His abode.
The entire universe
Is in love with His story
But the wise one
Loves only Him.

Az jurm fezoon yafta am fazle tura
Ein shud sabab-e-maasiat-e-baish mera
Har chand gunah baish, karam baishtar ast
Deedam hama jaa, ou azmudam hama jaa.

Sarmad! agarsh wafast khud mi ayad
Gar amadanesh rawast khud mi ayad
Behuda chera dar pai-e-ou mi gardi
Benasheen, agar Khuda ast, khud mi ayad.

Pour grace exceeds my transgressions.
It causes me to transgress more.
Your kindness outnumbers my sins
This I have seen
This is my experience.

Sarmad!
If He is faithful, He will come
If arrival is admissible, He will come.
Why do you wander in the wilderness?
Sit still, if He is God, He will come.

Sarmad! kay ze ishq sarmadi yaaf
Kaz baada-e-ishq be-khudi yaaf
Hushyar na shud ze taigh-e-jallad
Manzil ba muqam-e-Ahmedi yaaf.

Dil agar daana buwad under kinaresh yaar hast
Chashm gar beena buwad, dar har taraf deedar hast
Gosh agar shunwa shuwad, juz zikr-e-haque ke beshunud
Dar zaban goya buwad, dar har sukhan israr hast.

Sarmad! you have received love celestial.
From the goblet of love
You have received self-forgetfulness.
Don't become alert
Under the blade of the executioner.
Your journey's end.
Is the abode of Mohammad.

Jf the heart has wisdom
Its embrace will hold the Friend.
If the eye can see
The Radiance is everywhere.
If the ear can listen
What else but praise of God?
If the tongue can speak
Every word reveals the Mystery.

Beeewana-e-rangeeni-e-yaaray digaram
Hairat zada-e-naqsh-o-nigaray digaram
Aalam hama dar fikr-o-khayal-e-digar ast
Man dar gham-o-andesha-e-kaar-e-digaram.

Aashhoor shudi ba dilrubaai hama jaa
Be-misl shudi dar ashnaai hama jaa
Man aashiq-e-ein taur-e-tu am mi beenam
Khud ra na numaai wa numaai hama ja.

Jam possessed by the splendour
Of a Friend who is different
I am struck with the beauty
Of features that are different
The entire universe is immersed
In something else
My questions and doubts are different.

Everywhere is Your allurement known
Unique is Your friendship everywhere.
A lover am I of Your coyness Divine—
Not revealing Yourself
Your Radiance is everywhere.

Ai jalwagar-e-nihan ayan shud bedar aa
Dar fikr be justaim kay hasti tu kuja
Khwaham kay dar aaghosh kinarat geeram
Taa chand tu dar purdah numai khud raa.

Bar chand kay sad dost ba man dushman shud
Az dosti-e-yakai dilam aiman shud
Wehdat ba-gazeedaim wa ze kasrat rustaim
Aakhir man az ou shudaim, wa ou az man shud.

Hidden Vision, appear!
My quest – to find what entity you are.
My desire – to hold you in my embrace
How long will you let your image
Shimmer only through the veils?

Although hundreds of friends
Have become my foes,
The friendship of One
Has given security to my soul.
Rejecting many I have embraced the One –
At last
I am He and He is me.

Sarmad! gila ikhtisar mi bayad kard
Yak kaar az ein do kaar mi bayad kard
Ya tan be raza-ai dost mi bayad daad
Ya jaan barahash nisaar mi bayad kard.*

Az mansab-e-ishq sarfrazam kardand
Waz minnat-e-khalq bey-niazam kardand
Choon shama dar ein bazm gudazam kardand
Az sokhtigi mehram-e-raazam kardand.

* In *Bayaz-e-Majnoon* this line reads,
"Ya qate-nazar ze yaar-mi bayad kard."

Sarmad!

Shorten your complaint.
Of two choices, take one.
Either surrender your body
To the will of your friend
Or offer
To sacrifice your soul.

With the high rank of love
I was exalted.

Freed from – beseeching the populace.
In this gathering, I melted, like a candle
I burnt, until I became
An intimate of the Mystery.

Duniya na shawad aakhir-e-dam ba tu rafiq
Dar raah-e-khuda kosh rafiq ast-o-shafiq
Khwahi kay basar manzil-e-dildaar rasi
Guftam ba tu ai dost! hameen ast tariq.

Har nek-o-baday kay hast dar dast-e-khudaast
Ein maani-e-peda-o-nihan dar hama jaaast
Bawar na kuni agar dar ein jaa benigar
Ein zof-e-man o quwwat-e-Shaitan ze kujaast.

While your last breath
This world won't be your friend.
But on the path to God
You will have many companions.
If you want to reach your Beloved,
Listen, O friend.
This is the only path.

Evil and good
All lie in the hands of God.
Real or apparent
This truth, is known everywhere.
If you don't believe, look at me—
My feebleness and the Devil's might
Where does it come from?

Bar soz-o-gudaz-ha tamasha kardam
Yak jaa na hazaar jaa tamasha kardam
Sar rishta-e-roshni ba dast-e-digar ast
Parwana-o-shama ra tamasha kardam.

Aitebar-e-wada hai mardum-e-duniya ghalat
Haan ghalat, aaray ghalat, imshub ghalat, farda ghalat
Nuskha-e-beenai-e-deewan-e-umr-e-ma mapurs
Khat ghalat, maani ghalat, insha ghalat imla ghalat.

I witnessed the spectacle
Of pain and anguish.
I witnessed the splendour of the Vision.
In many places.
I witnessed the phenomenon
Of candle and moth.
But the radiance
Emanates from another source.

It is wrong,
Certainly wrong, wrong today, wrong tomorrow
To trust the promises of this world.
Do not ask
For the manuscript of my story,
Erroneous spelling,
Erroneous calligraphy
Mistaken meaning, mistaken style.

Cheezay kay man az jehan bajaan mi talabam
Jaan ra ba-salamat ze jehan mi talabam
Az mardam-e-duniya o ze duniya shab-o-roz
Deegar hawasam neest, aman mi talabum.

Duniya ba murad kheeshtan khuwahi wa bas
Uqba tu na kardi ze khudawand hawas
Choon ast na duniya-o-na uqba be dahand
Afsos! nadamat ze jehan yabad-o-bas.

With my heart I desire
Safety for my soul, in this world.
Day and night
From the people of this world
I ask nothing more
Than to be left in peace.

You desired happiness
But only in this world.
You did not entreat God
For happiness in the other world.
At once you lost
Both worlds
And all you were left with was
Lifelong repentance.

Cin fisq-o-fujour kaar-e-har roza-e-ma
Pur shud zegunah kaasa-o-kouza-e-ma
Meekhandad rozgaar o meegareed umr
Bar taat-o-bar namaz-o-bar roza-e-ma.

Cheezay kay gahay ba kaar naayad maa aim
Aan nakhl ke az ou baar naayad maa aim
Kardaim hisab-o-baish khud sanjeedaim
Aan zarra kay dar shumaar na ayad maa aim.

My cup is brimming with sin
Profligacy is my daily wage.
The world laughs,
And the passing years weep
At my fasting, my meditations
My prayers

Iam a thing
Of no use.
A tree that bears no fruit.
Having calculated my worth
I understood.
I am the minutest particle
Not even included in the counting.

Ai jaan-e-girami ba-Khuda nadaani
Dar khana-e-tan yak do seh dam mehmani
Bar charkh agar rawi wa khursheed shawi
Aan zarra kay dar shumaar na aayad aani.

Az fazl-e-Khuda hamesha raahat daaram
Ba naan-e-javin qanae-o-himmat daaram
Nay beem ze duniya-o-na andesha-e-deen
Dar gosha-e-maikhana faraghat daaram.

Soul, beloved Soul,
How foolish art thou!
In the cage of the body
You dwell one moment , two or three.
If you ascend to the heaven
And become the sun
You will still remain a particle
Not worth the counting.

By the grace of God,
Have I always been content.
From a loaf of barley-bread
I have drawn strength.
Afraid neither of the world nor religion,
Sitting in a corner of the tavern
I am free!

Sarmad! tu ze heech khalq dari ma talab
Az shakh-e-barehna saya dari ma talab
Izzat ze qenaat ast o khwari ze tamaa
Ba izzat-e-khweesh baash khwari ma talab.

Shaah-e-shahanaim zahid choon tu urian neestam
Shauq-o-zauq-e-shorisham lekin pareeshan neestam
But parastam kafiram, az ahl-e-imaan neestam
Su-e-masjid meerawam,amma musalmaan neestam.

From this shallow world
O Sarmad you expect friendship?
From the naked branch
You expect resplendent shade?
Grace lies in satisfaction,
In lust is debasement.
Coveting another's grandeur
Is your humiliation.

Jam the king of kings
O Sheikh! Not naked like you,
I love madness, dynamism, but I am not distraught
An infidel, an idolator,
I am not one of the pious.
I am going towards the mosque
But I am not a Muslim.

Ein hasti-e-mohoum hubaab ast be been
Ein behr-e-puraashob saraab ast be been
Az deeda-e-baatin benazar jalwagar ast
Aalam hama aina-o-aab ast be been.

Dar behr wujud az hubaab-e-kamtar
Maujay kay dar ein behr fetad hast khatar
Aina ba kaf begeer o yak dam benigar
Aksi tu dar ein aab bay-maani che qadar.

Like a bubble on water
This existence is ephemeral,
This raging storm is a mere mirage.
If the inner eye
Holds His vision
Then the universe
Becomes a mirror
Then waters become
Pools of reflection.

Pour existence is a mere bubble
On the ocean.
Every surging wave means danger.
Hold a mirror in your hand
Watch your reflection.
How long does the image hold?

Jnsan kay shikam seri az yak naan ast
Az hirs-o-hawa shaam-o-sehar naalan ast
Dar behr-e-wajudash benigar toofan ast
Aakhir chu hubaab yak nafas mehman ast.

Hasti be-nazar chay shud agar pinhani
Ein raaz-e-nihufta ra tu ham meedani
Joon shama ze fanoos numai khud raa
Paiwasta dar ein libaas-e-khud uryani.

Man,

Who is satiated by one loaf of bread,
Caught in greed and lust, worries day and night.
A storm which is no more than a bubble
Rages in the ocean of his existence
And bursts in a moment.

P

You exist in my eye
Even if you are unseen.
This mystery you know as well as I.
The candle ensconced in the chandelier
Displays herself.
Inextricable with clothes
Is nakedness.

Bar muttaquiam kaar be yaar ast mera
Ba subbah-o-zunnar che kaar ast mera
Ein khirqa-e-pashmina kay sad fitna dar oust
Baazash na kasham ba dosh aar ast mera.

Aankas kay tera taaj jehanbani daad
Mara hama asbaab-e-preshani daad
Poashand libaas har kara aibay deed
Bay-aiban ra libaas-e-uriani daad.

If my piety is for my Friend
What use to me is the chaplet of beads or sacred thread?
This cloak of Peshmina hides
A hundred sins.
To keep this weight on my shoulders
Is the ultimate shame.

The One
Who bestowed upon you this glorious crown,
To me He has given reason to weep.
Around those who had something to hide
He draped the cloth.
Gave nakedness
To one who was without blemish.

Dar ku-e-mughan mausam-e-gul manzil kun
Khud ra ba dar-e-junoon bezan ghafil kun
Ein khirqa-e-pashmina kay bar ast-o-wabaal
Az dosh beneh faraghatay haasil kun.

Man tukhm-e-hawas kashta am ghamgeenam —
Sad rang gul-e-daagh az ou mi cheenam
Toofan be-shawad agar na gardad khamosh
Ein aatish-e-khwahish kay ba khud mi beenam.

Make the tavern, your haven,
During times of spring
Surrender yourself to madness,
Remain oblivious.
This cloak of Peshmina
Is a burden on your shoulders
Lighten your shoulder and be free.

Having harvested
The seed of lust, I am pensive.
I pick the flowers
Which have a hundred blemishes.
If I do not extinguish
My flame of desire
It will become a blazing fire.

Ai dil! tu dar-ein zamana gumraah shudi
Paband-e-hawa-o-hirs-e-jankaah shudi
Zeen daam-e-bala agar be justi aakhir
Sar ta ba qadam dard-o-gham-o-aah shudi.

Hargiz ba Khuda zuhd riyai na kunam
Ghair az dar-e-maarfat gadai na kunam
Shahi kunam-o- mulk-e-faraghát geeram
Pewasta ba maikhana judai na kunam.

Hearth!

You were led astray in this world.
Caught in greed and lust you were agonised.
When, at last, you escaped this vortex
You became a living symbol
Of intense suffering.

In prayer

I will never dissemble,
Never will I beg
At any door save the door of Knowledge.
I am the king of all I survey
I enjoy freedom from want—
Never will I eschew my love for the tavern.

Sarmad! tu hadis-e-kaaba-o-dair ma kun
Dar wadi-e-shak chu gumrahan sair ma kun
Haan shewa-e-bandagi ze Shaitan aamooz
Yak qibla guzeen, sijda-e-bar ghair ma kun.

Bil baaz griftar-e-nigaaray shuda ast
Az fikr-o-gham-e-lala azaaray shuda ast
Man peer-o-dil-e-zauq-e-jawani darad
Hungam-e-khizaan josh-e-baharay shuda ast.

SH Sarmad!

Do not narrate the story
Of the Kaaba and the temple.
Like the lost souls
Do not wander in the valley of doubt.
Learn from Satan's mode of worship –
Prostrate yourself before the One
And before no other.

Imprisoned

Once again in the love of the nymph!
Immersed
In the thought of her splendid beauty
I am old but in my heart
Is the fervour of youth
At the peak of autumn
Is the passion for spring.

Az mardum-e-duniya-o ze duniya wehshat
Har chand bagiri ba kaf-aari rahat
Hangam-e-bahar o ham khizanesh deedum
Dar bagh-e-jehan neest gulay juz ibrat.

Choon peer shudam gunaah gardeed jawan
Be-shuguft gul-e-dagh behangam-e-khizan
Ein laala-rukhan tifl mizajam kardand
Gah muttaqi-am, gaqh sarapa isiyan.

Develop misanthropy
For the world and its people
No matter how much pleasure
You get from their touch.
In the heart of spring I have seen
The shade of autumn.
The only flower in this garden
Is the flower of admonition.

As I grew old
My sins became young—
Like flowers blooming during autumn.
Beautiful women with radiant faces
Made me childish.
Sometimes I was an ascetic,
Sometimes steeped in sin

Bar fasl-e-khizan tauba shikastan mushkil
Ba saaqi-o-mai ehad be-bastan mushkil
Hangam-e-khizan bahaar aamad be kinaar
Z-ein dard shikast-o-bast-o-rustan mushkil.

Geh shehar o-dayar, geh ba sehr rafti
Dar raah-e-hawas basad tamanna rafti
Ein qafila nazdeek sar-e-manzil raft
Itmam-e-safar gasht kuja ha rafti.

Difficult

To break the vow in autumn

Difficult

To make a pledge with the wine and Saqi.

If spring comes when one is in autumn's grip,

Alas! in this decline—

How difficult the making and breaking of vows.

You wandered

In the city, in the desert.

On the path of lust you walked with desire.

Now your caravan

Is nearing its destination

Your journey has ended

Whither now?

Az saqi-e-kausar mai-e-gulfam talab
Dar peeri-o-zof jaam-e-aaram talab
Ta chand griftar-ba duniya bashi
Az fazl-e-Khuda nijat z-ein daam talab.

Ayyam-e-bahar muttaqi jaam kushad
Hangam-e-khizan khumar b-ein naam kushad
Mai nosh kay sayyad-e-falak mi gardad
Har roz dar ein fikr kay dar daam kushad.

From the saqi of heaven
Ask for the blushing wine,
A soothing goblet for your advanced years.
No matter how entangled are you in this world,
From the grace of God
Ask for freedom from the snare.

During springtime,
Even the sage sips wine!
During autumn,
Intoxication lingers, but ever so slight.
Drink!
Because the Keeper of Death
Waits each day
To pull in his net.

Bingar kay azizan hama dar khaak shudand
Dar said gahay fana ba fitrak shudand
Aakhir hama ra khaak nasheen bayad shud
Geerum kay ba rafath hama aflak shudand.

Har kas be-hawas bagh-e-jehan deed guzasht
Khaar-o-gul-e-pazhmurda baham cheed guzasht
Ein surat-e-hasti kay tamamash maani ast
Afsos ber aankas kay na fahmeed guzasht.

Look!

All your loved ones have become dust.
All victims of death the hunter!
They rose to the arch of heaven
But first they dwelt in the tenement of clay.

With desiring eyes

All walked through the garden of life.
Picked flowers and thorns and passed by.
This appearance of life
Is replete with significance.
Alas!
This passing parade did not understand.